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Name Muriel Nelles Whyte Graduation year 19 38
Quebec 514-458-7292
Today's date: _____ 1991

I. Why did you choose to study at MES?

Well because I was always interested in sports, swimming, figure skating, etc. and it was my dream to go there. I had heard about through an aunt who lived in Toronto, and various other people had mentioned it and then I had the good fortune of meeting the former, while actually the fonder, Mary Hamilton, she was the first director of the school of physical education. She turned it from a school of Literature and Expression into a phys ed school. She was a wonderful woman. I was counsellor at camp Tanamakoon for four years. I went to Tanamakoon as a counsellor the year before I went to MES and through her I became more interested in going. Prior to that I had taking a secretarial course and was working in a lawyer's office as a legal secretary. And she convinced me that I should change my career. She offered me a scholarship. It was a scholarship that the school had for, it was not for exams, it was for people who they deemed suitable for the course, and this was done with interviews with members of the staff. It had a name, the Margaret Eaton Scholarship, and two were given each year. It was for tuition only and covered the entire tuition for both years. You were expected to pay it back in doing various things like life guarding at the pool and because of my secretarial ability I did certain work like that..... I admired Charlotte Layton a great deal too. She kept in touch with a lot of the graduates too. Now I do not think there is anyone who does that anymore. She was always a big help to the students.

II. What alternatives did you consider?

III. What are some of your fondest memories of being a student at MES?

I think our experiences at camp. Each year we started in September with a month at camp. My first year was at camp Tanamakoon where we were really in training for camp counsellors in canoeing, swimming, camp crafts and so on, and the second year it was at the Ontario Athletic commission camp where we had more track and field and that type of event and training. They alternated those camps.

IV. What are some of your worst memories of being a student at MES?

I enjoyed the least the practical side of anatomy. They had us dissecting actual stiffs. And we went over to the

university for that course. Dr. Ball was our instructor in charge and that sort of always turn me off. But it did teach us the muscles groups in a very practical way. This we had to know if were giving exercises to people and giving remedial training and so. We had to actually see the actual muscles that were to be trained. It was rather a tough course. A medical student I knew said it was like their fifth year anatomy course. I remember we had a very large medical book to study from. But it stick with me. I was at a seminar given by a specialist in this sort of thing on muscle use and exercise just this past year, she was from the states, I found that I really knew what she was talking about.

- V. With respect to your course work what are some of your fondest memories?

Dorothy Jackson stood out for me. She was a rather harsh task-master, she liked everything perfect. She was also on the staff at camp Tanamakoon where I first met her but I had great admiration for her teaching ability. And there was Elizabeth Raymer, she was more on the theory side. Whereas Dorothy Jackson was more on the practical side. We also had a wonderful modern dance teacher, Marion Hobday.... I don't remember the part-time teachers as well. We had a male vocal teacher for voice, Sterndale Bennett. Strangely enough he was teaching us how to project and all that sort of thing but he hardly moved his own lips. He expected us to do all these sort of things but he had a very set expression that never seemed to change, but I guess we must have learned something from him. This was probably a remnant of the Literature and Expression school.

Residence: In the first year, because I was going there with a scholarship and the family was in financial difficulty because my father was a civil servant, one of 5,000 who were let go by the Bennett government. It was with great difficulty that I got there at all. So I stayed at the WCTU residence which was just around the corner from the school. The second year they decided because I was head girl that I should be in residence so I was. I think they made an exception again and gave me the same rate I was paying at the WCTU. We had a very proper matron, resident mother, Mrs. Marriott, she like "her girls," as she called us, to behave ourselves as young ladies.

- VI. With respect to your course work what are some of your worst memories?

- VII. What do you remember about the school's principal and board?

VIII. How do you think most student's paid for their education at MES [summer jobs, parents paid....]?

Parents paid in those days. I don't know that many of them had summer jobs. Going to MES was more expensive than going to University at the time. It was considered a very specialized phys ed school and I think it was mostly the parents that paid. Some of the students had summer jobs as counsellors, that would be probably the most common summer job. But the remuneration was very small in those days. A couple of hundred dollars for the summer.

IX. In what ways have you kept in touch with alumnae of MES?

I don't know how long the alumnae association lasted. The last event I remember was a luncheon at the University of Toronto Faculty Club. We were living in Toronto at that time which would put in between 73 and 81. And Frank Whipper of the Phys Ed staff, of that time was trying to get some sort of a write up on the history of the school and employed students in phys ed to interview graduates. And I remember being a little bit miffed because I told him I was willing to be interviewed and never was. I do not know if he is still on the staff, I met him more recently in charge of a voyageur canoe trip. The students were, I think from the Thunder Bay area and they came down the Ottawa River as part of following the early voyageur routes.

I have kept in touch with friends, but the alumnae just seemed to evaporate. I never seemed to be on the mailing list and didn't seem to know what was going on from the time I graduated. The year younger than mine has kept in touch very well. That is Rhoda Woods year. The 1939 group. They have reunions, but my year, the 38 group, did not keep in touch other than friends. We all seemed to disperse. Have you come across Margaret Davison's name and attended her 50th wedding anniversary last september. Lisa Mailake was my room-mate, we have her address on our Christmas card list. Her husband died a year or so ago. Her address is:

Mrs. Stuart Keate
3455 Marpole Ave.
Vancouver, BC

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And Rhoda Woods is the third person I have kept in touch with. I don't know what made the difference. Our class dispersed and we are all these things about the junior class.

X. What kind of work/volunteer activities did you do as a result of your education at MES?

JB: one of the limitations of MES was that you could not teach in the public schools.

You are right there, you had to go through the Ontario College of Education for a year. That was not a problem for myself. I did not want to teach in a school I wanted to be in the field of recreation where people choose to go to activities rather than being more-or-less forced to. That was my philosophy from the start. My first job was at the girls' Y as director of activities, in Guelph.... I was health director at the YWCA in Guelph. I did that for one year and then I got a job offer from Eaton's Recreation Department in Toronto. They had a club for female employees called the Eaton Girls Club, there must have been a boys club too but I was not aware of it. They had a camp too, at Shadow Lake. That was a really neat job because we used the school premises when the school was not there in the evenings and camp for four months, June, July, August and September. I did that till 1941, I was married in January of 1941, and we moved to Montreal. For the first two years I didn't teach but was on an advisory board to the Montreal Y, then the Ottawa Y, and felt that with all the training I had I wanted to teach so I began teaching again and kept it up for 50 years - part-time, specializing in my favourite things, figure skating, swimming - synchronized. I did this in various locations, but mostly in universities. My husband being with an oil company, we were moved quite a bit to different cities, so I taught at the University of Alberta, McGill and Toronto. As either coach of the skating team or instructor of skating or synchronized swimming

XI. Did you pursue further education following MES? Where? Why?

I always kept up to date with what was current in the physical field.

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It was a very strenuous course. We started our year with 33 which was many more than were at a similar year at McGill. The MES had a repudiation for being the best at that time. The equivalent year say at the University of Toronto was 4 in number. They used to come over to our practical courses and we would go over to their other courses like anatomy. It had a very tough repudiation. And as I said the 33 did not all make it in the end. It was tough. I think we had about half drop out before the year was over. I forget the exact number that graduated. It wasn't 33 [17-19]. We lost some by the way side. I think 19 rings a bell.

JB: I had a question mark by a couple of people - Marion Maynard and a Margaret Ross.

Funny I don't remember those people. Maybe they did not complete.

It was certainly quite an education. If you consider that I taught for 50 years on those two years of instruction. I did specialize in my special things and I brought - formed six skating clubs to join the Canadian figure skating association as a result. So it provided us with a lot of know how. I am still on the board of the local YMCA, strangely enough, here. It is nice to be able to keep contributing.

XII. PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

- A. Your year of birth: 19 15
- B. Your country of birth: Canada
- C. Country of mother's birth: Canada
- D. Country of father's birth: Canada
- E. When you entered MES what occupations did your parents have?
- Mother's occupation: mother
- Father's occupation: Civil Engineer
- F. Where were you living before coming to MES?
- City: Ottawa
- Province: ont Country: Canada
- G. Which school did you attend prior to entering MES?

What grade (level) did you complete at this school? 13

plus a years business course. It was during the depression and I did not see any way of paying for MES and then went to work for a year. It was Mary Hamilton who said to me you will be a grandmother before you get enough money to get there. I kept thinking I'd earn it.

Was this a private or public school? private

- H. If you married, which year did you first do so: 19 41

Married to: (name) _____

Occupation of husband when married: oil company

- XIII. Would you be interested in receiving a copy of my abstract when I complete my study? yes, certainly!

Interview with Nora Gauld
November 12, 1991
By John Byl

Wiston

.... Eleanor Keyes Kay ['36].... I don't know her. Who was the furthest back? [Norah McClennan and Kitty Pepler] It rings a bell but not closely.... Charlotte Layton was sweet.... Is Mary Barker out east? [Nova Scotia] She taught at Western University. She is a great friend of Netta Thompson and Netta is my friend. She was a junior when I was a senior. But we were both born in London, Ontario.

Did you know that Mary Hamilton was director of Camp Tanamakoon.... Our daughter went.... It was a very exclusive camp. You went if you had money. Margaret Eaton, who is Lady Eaton's niece, her picture is here. She was a counsellor when I was a counsellor....

We spent September at camp. I remember the year I went down and on October 4 there was all snow on the fir trees. And they taught riding and I rode horse back through Algonquin. It was really beautiful.

This is MES. The back row is the seniors when I was there and the front row is my class. This is me. This was during the great depression. It was very bad. I went four years to Western and graduated in '32 because I had a very wealthy aunt in London who sent me. On the way driving up with her coloured chauffeur, she said to me I think you had better go into secretarial science and business administration because you can get a job after. I just said thank you because it was being paid for. So I went for four years but I really did not like it very well. I really wanted Physical Ed., the dancing and so forth. So when I graduated that summer I wrote to MES, and they sent me their brochure which said how much the fees were. I could not handle any of it. My dad and mother did not have any money and my aunt thought I should work. So I wrote back and said thanks but no thanks. There were only eleven of us. They were so desperate to get students to attend their school so that it would not go defunct. They wrote back to me and said we have a fellowship for you. The only obligation I had was some work -- a couple of nights a week I guarded in the pool, and this sort of thing. So I went two years just gratis. I really had no money. And these girls were wealthy. Every other girl was wealthy. This very attractive girl [end] she got a job teaching at Bishop Strachan, I supplied for her one day. Louis Dewar was her name. She was the debutante that year. She was very popular, very attractive, and lovely. At the end of the second year when it was time to graduate they had to have a valedictorian. It was customary for the girls to select the valedictorian and they chose me. I also know that the authorities would rather have had Louise because it would have meant more good publicity for them. I was afraid I was no asset to them -- socially it should have been Louise. This girl, Babs Hesseltine was from Japan, her parents were

missionaries I suppose.... She won the gold medal and had been in private school all her life. This girl is Joyce Withrow, and she is one of my best friends. I told her last night you were coming.... and she is a lovely girl and went to private school. Then she went a year to U. of T. but it was too big and she could not handle it. Then she went to MES. She was very good. She was lovely and taught at a girls school afterwards... [tape off/on] Squirt Adams was kind of portly, whenever we did massage, everyone wanted to have her because you could rotate her muscles easily. The rest of us were a wee bit thin. But these girls all had money. And MES was really a lovely school. We went to Eaton's College once every three months for a concert at night. We would get all dressed in fancy dresses. It was a lovely place to go. I certainly was the poorest one there I can tell you that. These uniforms all had six or eight blouses -- I had one -- my mother said wear it and come home and my mother was a good sewer and she made me about four or five.... They gave me my uniform and mine was quite short. It was a lovely school and I was very fortunate to go there. I loved going. I liked it better than my four years at university because I was doing what I wanted to do.

When you graduated from this school after two years, the only place you could work in Canada was at the YWCAs or the Private schools which paid nothing, really nothing in those days, very poor poor pay. I taught in a girl's private school in London, for \$68.00 a month, and lived at home. I saved my \$68.00 a month and then I came down to Toronto for the Ontario College of Education, and got my teachers thing and then I got my job in Toronto. I still go out and supply and now I make \$150.00 a day. Marvellous money.... Now I don't teach PE. So I reluctantly reverted back to my business education and supply in that. [teacher of the year last year?] Right but I think that was as much for longevity as anything else.

Netta lived on an organic farm, a beautiful place. My husband and I went to see it a few years ago.... the cherries were huge. They went out there and moved the rocks to get it started. It has been a great success. I have an article from Harrowsmith on her.

MES brings back very fond memories back to me. We all adored Miss Hamilton. She was the director. The year I graduated she resigned. Miss Somers took over, an American. She was good. But different. No smoking ever allowed. We lived in residence. One day she called me to her room after dinner at night for some reason. You could not see in the air because it was blue with smoke. We used to get a kick out of that. She was good. But different from Miss Hamilton and the English teachers we had before. Their whole attitude and approach to teaching was different. When Miss Somers came she had an American teacher come and teach tumbling. But I found a great difference then. They thought the Canadians were a little bit dull and that we weren't very talented. They pushed and pushed. I was always

very poor in tumbling and I could never do it properly. We had an exhibition at Varsity Arena and it cost 25 cents to go. And my mother and dad came to Toronto, and then they had the part for tumbling and Varsity Arena is a pretty big arena and there was only eleven of us so you can imagine how conspicuous we felt. Then it was time to do the tumbling. My part, along with another girl was as dopey as I was at it, our part was to put the mats out and then run away and then when it was over to put them back. When it was over I remember my mother saying "I thought your part was the nicest."

MES was not so slow. The School was right at Yonge and College and nothing palatial which you might suspect an physical ed school should be. But they were smart enough that when they put pictures for the brochure we went to Rosedale to a Mr. Deacon's estate and took the pictures there. Miss Joyce's father was a daughter and she knew a lot of these people that I had never grown up with. If they would have taken them at Yonge, it was just a building. It was adequate but very old.... It was old old when we were there. You went down to two stories to the swimming pool and the ceiling was so low that when we went for our silver medal we could not dive so we went around the corner to the YWCA and do the diving part there. There was no height.

The residence were lovely, we had a room upstairs. This is all staff. This is Miss Kaulbach who came from Bedford in England. She was perfection because that is what Bedford University is know for. If you were good in England that is where you would go. Mrs. Marriott.... We were raised in a large poor family with seven children, we lived in the living room and used things.... and the first sunday I was in the residence living room I remember reading the paper and then leaving it on the chesterfield. Mrs. Marriott called me down, "You never leave a paper on the chesterfield, unheard of." It was all new to me.

Everyone at MES was marvellous. This girl is Margie Gurd. She was related to the Gurd's in Montreal who owned Canada Dry -- her uncle or dad. I always remember that, because we were going away for a weekend and I did not have an overnight bag and she just went down and bought me one. I was quite humiliated. I was not using to girls having money and doing those kind of things. There is another picture of Margie Gurd -- she was a year later. It was a beautiful school to go to.

Here is tumbling. Here is me with no form and no possass. There we are in residence. This tumbling is in the back of the building at Yonge. Mrs. Marriott had high society in her mind but she was not really anybody, and not very popular, but she thought she was. And she loved being the head mistress at the Margaret Eaton School. She just didn't have it, she was cold.

Miss Kaulbach was a very attractive woman. She came from Nova Scotia. She loved figure skating. She was beautiful to watch. Then she got married and got pregnant. And she was beautiful.

eight months pregnant she was skating around. We wondered what would happen if she fell, but she didn't. She was very, very nice. She did lacrosse too. It was hard to do....

The others all had money. I never had a fancy dress. The girls and staff were lovely. Dora Mavor Moore was a great playwright.... The year I graduated we had our closing night at the Old Mill, that was a big deal. I thought I would be terribly clever, because I had my BA., that I thought I would say the grace in Latin, can you imagine doing something so silly. I didn't know what I was saying. You know you think back on it you see how silly you are. These girls were great in archery and horseback riding, but they were not great academic people..... Lucille Kirk came from Vancouver. The year before she went to MES, her grandmother and her took a trip around the world for a whole year. That is the sort of person that was at MES. If you go around the world at the age of 17, that is pretty wonderful isn't it? I remember when I was at MES and being invited back to Western for a formal dance that Lucille loaned me a pink beaded dress, I was quite elegant for the night. She had so many evening clothes. She was a beautiful girl, and the money, absolutely everything that money could buy... I may stress it more because I was never accustomed to seeing such wealth. We were from a large family. I actually started teaching when I was fifteen at the church for 50 cents a night. I mean these things they never heard of. None of these girls were saying, "Oh, I wonder where I will get a job?" It never crossed their minds. Never....

There is our graduation.... Gertrude something [Henderson] was from Scotland. She lived on Bloor street with a couple of maiden aunts. She had porridge every morning, and they were very strict. She had quite an accent and would say, "I would love a hatt daag [hot dog]." My two roommates were Babs Hesseltine and Flora. Babs Hesseltine used to send her from Japan, silk blouses just in an a brown envelope like you would send a letter in. I am afraid we were envious of her.... Babs was quite fascinating, she was beautifully figured an very talented. A lovely, lovely girl....

When I left MES, and I went home and a professor at the university [Western] said to me, "would you to Miss Matthews [private school] and help the little girls learn the May Pole." It was the wealth of London. I said yes. He said we will pay you and I said you don't need to it is a pleasure. And I did it. In September they asked if I would come back and teach four girls and teach dancing to the whole school. I did that for a whole year. Then I went to OCE.... My name does not have an "h" on the end of Nora, I just put it on at the end of university because I thought it was rather eloquent. But I am christened Nora. I am now back to Nora because I realized there is nothing great about putting an "h" on the end. You can have any of these pictures if they will help you.... My husband worked for Bell

Telephone from age 16 to 65 and then he started going to the U. of T. and graduated at the age of 75.... I'd be happy if you had this....

This is my valedictory. Is it ever dull. It reads terrible. I do not even think I wrote it. I think Miss Kaulbach directed me and I needed to speak with correct English accents. I think the teachers did it. I don't think I ever did it. But anyway it reads very funny now....

We married in 1940 during the war. We met in 38 or 39. We were late bloomers.... It was a beautiful school. It was an excellent staff. People adored Miss Layton. I remember Miss Kaulbach sent us all invitations to her wedding in Nova Scotia. None of us could go. It was a wonderful feeling to be at MES. For me it was an exciting part of my life. All I did was apply and look at the luck I had.... I arrived at MES and had everything handed to me, uniform.... I paid a little... I was the lucky one. I was the oldest to, since I finished my BA. Helen Paterson ['30] may have been older than me.... After OCE we all lived together in an apartment, Helen Paterson, Flora Secord and myself in Toronto,... I taught an Northern Secondary. There were four boys who lived upstairs from Queens, it was lovely.

Monday Morn -
June 15, 1992

Dear Mr. John,

I do appreciate all you have done for me. Thanks for the pictures - The group one is excellent - But the one with your Mother and Father really delighted me - I thought they were both charming parents.

Our only grand daughter, who is twelve years old, flew in alone from California on Saturday eve - we went to a family reunion in Applegate River and Charlotte is so exhausted she hasn't risen yet and we just finished lunch! Youth is wonderful -

Good wishes to Father-in-law and your precious family -

Sincerely,

Dona Distow



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